

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 010717
ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /048 R

DRAFTED BY EA/K:FMISCH:AP
APPROVED BY EA/K:RGRICH
-----012793 140211Z /75

O R 140123Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, KS, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS ON KOREA

1. IN HIS JANUARY 13 MEETING WITH NON-WASHINGTON EDITORS
AND NEWS DIRECTORS, THE PRESIDENT OPENED WITH THE FOLLOWING

FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO WELCOME YOU ALL HERE AND LET YOU
KNOW THAT IT IS VERY GOOD FOR ME TO HAVE A CHANCE TO MEET
ON THESE FAIRLY FREQUENT OCCASIONS WITH EDITORS AND OTHER
NEWS LEADERS FROM AROUND THE NATION. I WILL OUTLINE JUST
A FEW THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON RIGHT NOW THAT MIGHT BE OF
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INTEREST TO YOU, AND SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS WE HAVE
AVAILABLE ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS.

WE HAVE NOW CONCLUDED A VERY GOOD AGREEMENT WITH THE SOUTH
KOREANS AND WITH TONGSUN PARK AND HIS LAWYER FOR A VERY
THOROUGH DISCUSSION WITH HIM ON THE RECORD WITHOUT ANY
CONSTRAINTS, EVEN WITH LIE DETECTOR CONFIRMATION, OF HIS

VERACITY AND WITHOUT ANY PROHIBITION AGAINST THE FUTURE INTERROGATIONS BY THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES, WHICH I THINK IS VERY SATISFACTORY.

THIS HAS BEEN AN UNPLEASANT INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

OURSELVES AND THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF THE SENSITIVITY OF THIS ISSUE. BUT I HAVE ALWAYS KEPT IN MIND HOW IMPORTANT OUR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTH KOREAN PEOPLE IS TO US AND TO THEM, AND EVEN TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF NORTHEAST ASIA.

WE HAVE HAD A DEFENSE PACT WITH THE SOUTH KOREANS EVER SINCE 1954. WE INTEND TO HONOR ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THAT DEFENSE TREATY. WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE SECURITY OF SOUTH KOREA. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM AND NORTH KOREA RESOLVED IN A FRIENDLY AND MUTUALLY CONSTRUCTIVE FASHION.

WE SUPPORT DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH KOREANS. WE WILL PARTICIPATE WITH THEM AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES IF NECESSARY. WE HAVE BEEN INVITED BY THE NORTH KOREANS INDIRECTLY AT LEAST TO MEET WITH THEM WITHOUT THE SOUTH KOREANS BEING PRESENT. WE ARE NOT WILLING TO DO THAT.

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WE ENJOYED LAST YEAR ABOUT A \$5-1/2 BILLION TRADE WITH SOUTH KOREA, ABOUT A BILLION OF WHICH WAS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. I WANTED TO MENTION THIS BECAUSE QUITE OFTEN IN THE EXCITEMENT OF DISCUSSING THE UNPLEASANT TONGSUN PARK EXPERIENCE WE LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT SOUTH KOREA IS A STRONG ALLY OF OURS.

WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN SOUTH KOREA, AND WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO IMPRESS UPON THE LEADERS IN SOUTH KOREA THAT THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR US AND CREATES A BAD IMPRESSION AMONG OUR OWN PEOPLE. END TEXT.

2. IN ANSWER TO A LATER QUESTION, THE PRESIDENT SAID "I STARTED OUT THIS SESSION EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE TO US OF STRONG TIES TO SOUTH KOREA WHICH HAS KIND OF BEEN A LYNCH PIN, MILITARILY SPEAKING, FOR THE NORTHEAST ASIAN PART OF THE WORLD."

3. THE TRANSCRIPT HAS BEEN EMBARGOED FOR ALL EXCEPT PARTICIPANTS IN THE MEETING UNTIL 3:00 P.M. EST SATURDAY, JANUARY 14. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BRIBERY, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE010717
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FMISCH:AP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780021-0521
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780162/aaaacarg.tel
Line Count: 116
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 76a463e3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3773986
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS ON KOREA
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, KS, US
To: SEOUL
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/76a463e3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014